

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants thank the Examiner for careful review of this application. Claims 1-7 and 9-14 have been rejected. Claims 1, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 14 have been amended. Claims 3, 4, 8, and 10 have been canceled in view of the examiners remarks. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application in view of the above amendments and additions and the following remarks submitted in support thereof.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b):

Claims 1-7, 9, 12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lenz et al. (U.S. Patent Number 5,534,751, herein after "Lenz"). This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claim 1 and claim 9 have been amended to more clearly define the claimed invention. For the reasons put forth below, Applicants respectfully submit that Lenz's fails to disclose each and every element of the claimed invention, as defined in independent claims 1 and 9.

Lenz teaches a plasma reaction chamber which utilizes a confinement assembly composed of one to several rings. Screws attach the confinement rings to plungers extending into the chamber. Lenz describes slots (31) between rings and spacers (34) that have "planar upper and lower surfaces and lateral dimensions large enough to provide desired support for the rings" (column 7 lines 17-21). The configuration of rings shown in Figure 2 of Lenz' teaching illustrates rings incorporated with spacers.

In contrast, claim 1 of the claimed invention, as amended, provides that the rings are substantially planar, coupled to stepped hangers and capable of adjustment in the vertical direction. It is submitted that Lenz fails to teach or suggest use of planar rings or planar rings coupled to stepped hangars. The rings of Lenz contain raised sections called spacers (34). Space between the rings is accomplished by stepped hangars in the present invention. In the claimed invention, hangers receive and couple the rings so that the rings may be suspended in the wafer processing chamber. Accordingly, claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Lenz as Lenz fails to teach each and every element of the claimed invention. Claims 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, and 12 each of which depend from claim 1, are likewise patentable over Lenz for at least the same reasons set forth above for claim 1.

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Claim 9 was also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lenz. The rejection is respectfully traversed. Claim 9 as amended is submitted to be patentable over Lenz. Lenz teaches confinement rings with spacers that are attached to plungers by screws. In contrast, in amended claim 9 of the claimed invention the rings having a substantially planar surface are capable of being suspended on stepped hangers such that spacing is provided between the rings. Applicants respectfully submit claim 9 is patentable over Lenz in that Lenz fails to disclose each and every element of the claimed invention, as defined in independent claim 9. 13 and 14 each of which depend from claim 9, are likewise patentable over Lenz for at least the same reasons set forth above for claim 9.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a):

Claims 10-11 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lenz in view of Arai et al (JP11214487, herein after "Arai"). Arai teaches two bores for use as a twist and lock adapter in an expandable jig used for holding substrates. Claim 10 has been canceled. As will be discussed below, the combination of Lenz in view of Arai does not teach or disclose the invention as claimed in amended dependent claims 11 and 13. Claims 11 and 13 are dependent on claims 5 and 9, respectively. Furthermore, the combination of these references does not raise a *prima facie* case of obviousness against dependent claims 11 and 13.

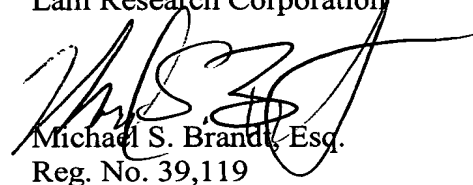
To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness, there must be some suggestion of motivation, either in the references or in the knowledge generally available to one having ordinary skill in the art, to combine the references. Additionally the references when combined must teach or suggest all the claim features. Applicants submit that the examiner has not established a *prima facie* case of obviousness because when combined the references do not teach or suggest all the claim features. Claim 11, which depends from claim 5, provides vertical movement of planar rings separated by a stepped hanger positioned within a hanging bore such that locking is provided by rotation. Claim 13, which depends from claim 9, also provides for locking of substantially planar rings by vertical movement separated by a stepped hanger positioned in the hanging bore once rotated. Accordingly, neither claim 11 nor 13 are rendered obvious over Lenz in view of Arai and are therefore submitted to be patentable.

Conclusion

In summary, as Lenz fails to teach each and every element of the claimed invention, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-7, 9, and 11-14 are patentable as currently presented. Additionally, as Lenz in view of Arai fails to teach planar rings separated by a stepped hanger coupled by twist and lock functionality, applicants respectfully submit that claims 11 and 13 are patentable.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that all the pending claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions concerning the present Amendment, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at (510) 572-1667. If any additional fees are due in connection with filing this Amendment, the Commissioner is also authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-1842 (Order No. P0815). A duplicate copy of the transmittal is enclosed for this purpose.

Respectfully submitted,
Lam Research Corporation



Michael S. Brandt, Esq.
Reg. No. 39,119

Lam Research Corporation
4650 Cushing Parkway, CA-1
Fremont, CA 94538
Telephone: (510) 572-1667
Customer Number 27787